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# AIMS AND METHODS OF TEACHING MISSIONS

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In a few colleges the subject of Missions occupies all the time of one professor and constitutes a department. But in Baker University it has been the custom to present one course in missions each year. This theme is discussed in the light of that fact. We shall discuss the several aims of teaching missions in a small college.

## 1. INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER LANDS

The first aim is very simple, mainly to give information concerning other lands, other people, other customs, other beliefs and other ideals; for every student is broadening who can rise above his own provincialism and become a spectator of other lands and ages.

Since the days of Herodotus, world traveler and Father of History, it has been clear that any man who knows only his own town, even though it be New York City, is provincial. And one of the first aims of a college should be to help students live in a larger world than they have known.

The world is so closely bound together today, and we are so dependent on other lands for our food and every-day comforts, that a fire in a far-away land can cause the whole world to burst into a mighty conflagration. Therefore every student should aim to know something about the other side of the world, and a course in missions is especially adapted to this end.

## 2. COMPARE GREAT RELIGIONS

The second aim of a course in Missions is to present a comparative study of the great religions of the world. We are not anxious to prove that other religions are false, and all other lands

utterly lost in blackest night, for "in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him." We are glad to find the high moral maxims which the Sage of China stated, and the emphasis which the Buddha gave to the idea that ceremonies and sacrifices to many gods cannot give a man peace and victory in a world of suffering. We are ready to say with Paul at Athens, "I see that in every way you are very religious," for men will always worship something. Our aim in this course of Missions will be to recognize the good points of the ethnic faiths and observe wherein they differ and where they are like Christianity.

### 3. EVOLUTION OF RELIGION

The third aim will be to trace the evolution of the religious impulse through the ages. Primitive man had primitive ideas of morality and God. How these ideas slowly have grown and sloughed off their crude original implications is an intensely fascinating subject. The student of missions must study the history of religion.

The teacher should aim to show his students how the patient God, the divine teacher of the ages, has been speaking to the race little by little, as fast as the ear of man could catch the divine harmony. How crude were the ideas which the race had in the primary grades of the school. But the student sees the fact of a growing revelation of God to the world. The writer of the book of Hebrews sensed the truth when he said, "Little by little and in many ways God spoke to the fathers through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us through his son."

Milton's picture of a superman, Adam, beside whom Plato appears puny and Apollo looks deformed, has seemed at first thought to many as the noblest conception of the origin of religion. But on second thought, it appears a nobler idea to conceive of God as the great divine teacher trying to convey His thoughts to men through the ages as they grew in their ability to understand Him. Through experience and repeated attempts to recite their lesson with many blunderings and mistakes, the world has progressed in

religion. It will be the aim of the teacher of missions to increase faith and the forward look and expect God to reveal yet much undiscovered truth to his children.

#### 4. APPRECIATION OF THE UNIVERSAL NOTE IN THE BIBLE

Another aim of the teacher of missions will be to help his students appreciate the universal note in the Bible. In spite of the fact of Jewish exclusiveness and bigotry, there are many messages in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament which stress the fact that Jew and Christian were to share their religion with the rest of the world. In Genesis we are reminded that in Abraham "All the families of the earth shall be blessed." In the great prophet of the Exile, we read that Israel was to bless the world not by *ruling* it but by *serving* it. "Behold Israel my servant." The bigotry of the people was rebuked in that fine story of Ruth where we learn that it was possible even for a Moabitess to be an ideal woman and from her descendents would come the noblest king Israel ever boasted. The book of Jonah, the greatest missionary book of the Old Testament, whether you care to interpret it as a parable or an allegory, gives us a great message rebuking Jewish selfishness and picturing God as glad to receive Nineve. And no one can read the New Testament and make it mean anything if he fails to see the urgent note of love for others which marks its pages, sending Christians out to help the world even as the whole life of Jesus was spent in loving ministry for others.

Therefore it will be a very important aim of the teacher of missions to help the student gain a larger appreciation of the Bible as the unique book with such a universal note that it can claim to be a book for the whole world—its topics the grandest the mind of man can conceive; its style, simple, dignified, and wonderfully adapted for translation; its reticence, remarkable in omitting many crude ideas which have marred other sacred books and prevented them from belonging to the ages; its social passion, evident from the earliest time when the Jewish laws began to soften the lot of the slave, alleviate the suffering of the poor, and correct

oppression by the rich; its doctrine of God "one that can survive with the increase of knowledge, for it pictures" God as personal, holy, loving, and near to man.

## 5. HEROES OF WORLD-WIDE CHRISTIANITY

Certainly it is a worthy aim to help the students become acquainted with the lives of great missionaries in home and foreign lands, for the best way to learn religion is to see it incarnate in fine personalities. The story of Carey, cobbler, scholar and translator of the Scriptures into twenty-four languages of India; the adventures of Livingstone, explorer, physician, and fighter of the terrible slave traffic in Africa; the unselfish heroism of Dr. Arthur Frame Jackson, skilled physician, who gave his life in Manchuria in battle against the plague, saving thousands; the practical work of Mackay of Uganda; and the Acts of countless other Apostles in the modern world give not only information but a sense of gladness and faith in the goodness and unselfishness of the human race.

## 6. PREPARATION OF LIFE WORK

In our colleges are many young people inspired with a desire to give their lives in service to the world. One aim of the course in missions will be to help these young people in preparation for their life work, assisting them to make intelligent choice of their field of work, and enabling them to know more definitely what problems await them there. Not only will a study of Missions help young people who are planning to go to a foreign mission field, but also it should aim to prepare those who stay at home to do their share in the evangelization of the world.

## 7. WORLD FELLOWSHIP

A course in Missions can promote a spirit of world fellowship. The greatest need of the age is to rise above the suspicions and jealousies that mark the nations, and to acquire the feeling of the unity of the race and the brotherhood of man.

Sympathy, that characteristic of a fine soul growing out of a vivid power of imagination, enabling one to stand in the place of another and feel with him and suffer with him, that is a needed virtue which could bind the whole world together with golden chains and which would prevent industrial and racial wars. How well the teacher of missions can arouse that sense and help it find expression as he pictures the needs of bleak Labrador, and lonely mountain districts in our own land, crowded city sections and congested China. The teacher of missions has a rare opportunity to arouse the feeling of sympathy and appreciation and friendliness, and cooperation, and sense of justice, for the student of missions has the broad field of the world, and the amelioration of its family, community, industrial, national and international relationships. This study will deepen the religious life of the student, make him forget self, appreciate the needs of others, and be conscious of God.

## II. METHODS IN TEACHING MISSIONS

There are a few principles which the teacher should follow in presenting Missions to a group of college students. After teaching Greek for several years I feel very strongly the need of observing the following rules:

1. Let the student do the work, for in the case of under-graduates it is not best for the instructor to use all the time in lectures.
2. Let the work be accurate, for it is very irreligious for a student in a course in Missions to be slovenly and deal in vague generalities.
3. On the other hand let us avoid the folly of extreme statisticians, for it is possible to accumulate an endless list of figures and fail to arrive at real facts.
4. Let the instructor use various methods of conducting class sessions, for when students realize that the instructor will always do the same thing, sleepiness and indifference follow.
5. Let the teacher have such variety, definiteness and enthusiasm as will keep the students alert, interested, desiring, connecting, comprehending, inquiring, reviewing, remembering and inspiring.

## OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

The most important thing in method is to have a clear outline and clear order of the material to be presented. The writer has used the following outline:

### FIRST DIVISION

#### I. The Bible and Missions.

##### 1. The universal note of the Old Testament.

- a. The Pentateuch—Mankind of one blood;  
Enlarging circles of blessing;  
Prophetic note of hope;  
Religion not magic but the whole  
life brought under the reign of  
law.

##### b. The Prophetic-Historical Books—

- Prayer for the foreigner: 1 Kings 8:41-43;
- Divine blessing on a Gentile widow;
- Healing for a Syrian leper;
- Praise for a Moabite woman, Ruth.

##### c. The Writings of the Prophets—

- Amos—God interested in the surrounding  
nations.

Religion not ceremony but justice.

Hosea—Religion is love, and mere Jewish nationalism is not adequate.

Micah—The Prophet of the Poor.

Power and wealth not a guarantee of  
divine favor.

Isaiah—The Prophet of Faith.

And Messianic chapters in the Book of  
Isaiah, 9, 11, 35, 40, 53, 60.

Jeremiah—The Prophet of Personal Piety.

And the Inward Covenant.

Ezekiel—The Prophet of Individualism.

Ezekiel 18—Individual Responsibility.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Ezekiel 47—Vision of healing waters.

While a priest-prophet and writing about  
a restored temple still he stresses the  
fact that religion must be personal.

Jonah—The greatest missionary book of the  
Old Testament.

Rebuke of the exclusiveness of Israel.

God's love universal.

Daniel—An Apocalypse.

God's everlasting kingdom.

Kings subject to heaven.

d. The Poetical Books—

Job—Fine type of a seeker for truth, a man of  
Uz, not a Jew.

Psalms—Universal and devotional songs for all  
nations and ages.

Psa. 24, 23, 22, 67, 72.

2. The Message of the New Testament—universal salvation.

a. Jesus' teachings about the kingdom—inward, univer-  
sal, eternal.

b. Jesus' missionary campaigns—personal search for  
disciples; early work in Judea; mission among  
Samaritans; three tours in Galilee; mission in Berea.

c. Commission to the disciples.

Matt. 28:18-20

Acts 1:1-8

Luke 24:45-47

John 20:21

d. Luke, the Universal Gospel—Simeon's prophecy;  
angel chorus to shepherds; general mission of the  
seventy; the thankful Samaritan; Zaccheus and the  
Publican.

e. Paul's Centers of missionary labor—Damascus,  
Cilicia (Tarsus), Antioch of Syria, Galatia, Mace-  
donia, Achaia (Corinth), Asia (Ephesus), Rome.

f. The first General Council of the early church—Chris-  
tianity not a Jewish sect, but a world-wide religion.



## II. Translation of the Bible into other tongues.

1. Greek, Septuagint.
2. Syrian, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, early Latin.
3. The Vulgate.
4. Translations into English.
  - a. Wycliff—translated from the Vulgate a complete Bible.
  - b. Tyndale—translated from Greek and Hebrew, and printed.
  - c. Coverdale—
  - d. The Genevan Bible.
  - e. The Great Bible.
  - f. King James' version.
  - g. The Revised version, and the American Standard revision.
5. Bible translated into six hundred languages.
6. William Carey translated the Bible into twenty-three languages of India.
7. Adoniram Judson, translation into Burmese.
8. Robert Morrison, translation into Chinese.

## III. The distribution of printed Bibles.

1. The British and Foreign Bible Society.
2. The American Bible Society.
3. The work of the colporters.
4. Comparison of the sales of the Bible with those of the best sellers.

## IV. The Influence of the Bible.

1. Literary influence in Christian lands .
2. In Non-Christian lands.
3. Influence of Bible on Life, in various countries.

## SECOND DIVISION

*Leaders of World-Wide Christianity*

A study of thirty-five biographies of Christian leaders.

The most interesting way to study actual missionary work is to become acquainted with several of the leading Christian workers in the modern missionary movement.

Our plan has been to have the students of the class present in the most effective way the life and work of these leaders.

1. William Carey of India
2. David Livingston of Africa
3. Robert Morrison of China
4. Adoniram Judson of Burmah
5. Melville Cox of Africa
6. Alexander Mackay of Uganda
7. John Williams of the Society Islands
8. John Hunt of the Fiji Islands
9. John C. Patteson of Melanesia
10. Titus Coan of Hawaii
11. John Stewart, negro missionary to the Wyandotte Indians
12. Henry Whipple, Bishop of Minnesota
13. Chinese Gordon, of China and Sudan
14. Mary Jones of Wales
15. Samuel Hadley of New York, Water St. Mission
16. John L. Nevius of China
17. Jose de Anchieta of Brazil
18. Peter Parker of Canton, China
19. Guido Verbeck of Japan
20. Ion Keith Falconer of Arabia
21. Matthew Yates of China
22. Samuel J. Mills, founder of A.B.C.F.M., and home missionary
23. Dr. John K. Mackenzie of China
24. Isabella Thorburn of Lucknow, India
25. Allen Gardiner of Terra del Fuego
26. Cyrus Hamlin of Turkey
27. Arthur Frame Jackson of Manchuria, China
28. Dr. Mary Stone of China
29. William Thompson of Palestine
30. Hans Egede of Greenland
31. William Taylor of California, Australia, India and Africa
32. William Butler of India and Mexico
33. Alice Jackson of New York City
34. James Robertson of Canada
35. Jacob Riis of New York City

## THIRD DIVISION

*The Spread of Christianity in the Modern World*

After becoming acquainted with missionary heroes in a personal way, a larger historical study of the growth of the missionary movement was followed, using as a text book "The Spread of Christianity in the Modern World" by Professor E. C. Moore of Harvard. There is no need to give detail outline of that course in this paper.

## FOURTH DIVISION

*The Great Religions of the World*

One year we followed the outline of Menzies "History of Religion."

1. The Religions of the Early World—The earliest objects of worship.
2. Isolated National Religions—Babylonia and Assyria, China, and Egypt.
3. The Semitic Group—Canaanites and Phenicians, Israel and Islam.
4. The Aryan Group—Early Aryans, Teutons, Greece, and Rome. Religions of India—Vedic, Brahmanism, Buddhism. Persia.
5. Universal Religion—The universalism of Christianity.

Another year instead of Menzies we used Spears "The Light of the World." This presents in a very earnest and appreciative way the following religions:

1. Hinduism; 2. Buddhism; 3. Animism, Confucianism and Taoism; 4. Mohammedanism.

The book closes with two chapters:

1. What the Christians of Asia think of the Non-Christian Religions.
2. Christ the Only Light of the World.

## METHODS OF CONDUCTING CLASS

1. The simplest is the familiar method of recitation. A definite text book like Moore's permits the question and answer method.

2. Occasionally a regular lecture is needed. When the instructor wishes to present material not found in the text book, or reference books, or which would be impossible for the students to get in a reasonable amount of study, then he may lecture.

Thus I have tried to give lectures on such comparative studies as "Jesus and Buddha" or "The Epics of Greece and India."

3. Occasionally a stereoptical lecture helps a class to definitely visualize the material. Slides can be had in abundance showing all mission fields.

4. "Minute Men" speeches, so familiar during the war, I have found useful in training students to condense a long discussion into a pointed talk.

5. "Graphic lectures" is a term I have used to describe a talk illustrated with charts and pictures. Many figures are confusing to the average student and it is very easy to draw a diagram of a map showing comparative areas, population and progress.

6. "Student debates" arouse definite interest in the study of certain themes where there is room for honest difference of opinion.

7. "Missionary pageants" and the use of curios sent by our own graduates from foreign lands have proved effective in arousing personal interest in the work in many lands carried on by our own friends.